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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A ~~system~~ program guide for an interactive information distribution system having provider equipment and subscriber equipment comprising:

a video layer of ~~asaid~~ program guide for an interactive information distribution system, said interactive information distribution system having provider equipment and subscriber equipment, said video layer having at least one user selectable object associated with selectable video content sent from said provider equipment to said subscriber equipment, said video layer sent from said provider equipment to said subscriber equipment; and

a graphics layer of said program guide, where ~~said~~ the graphics layer selectively overlays and provides emphasis and de-emphasis of said at least one user-selectable object in ~~said~~ the video layer.

2. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~ program guide of claim 1 wherein said video layer contains a video region and a graphical region.

3. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~ program guide of claim 1 wherein said program guide is generated in a central location of said information distribution system.

4. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~ program guide of claim 2 wherein ~~said~~ the video region contains a video barker having associated audio.

5. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~ program guide of claim 2 wherein said graphical region contains a list of program titles.

6. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~ program guide of claim 1 wherein said graphics layer provides emphasis and de-emphasis ~~is performed by masking or revealing an object in the video layer.~~

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7. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 6 wherein, to perform said masking and revealing, ~~said~~the graphics layer selectively changes an opacity of a region of ~~said~~the graphics layer.
8. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~the video layer and graphics layer are contained in an applet.
9. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 1 wherein an identity of an emphasized object is controlled by a viewer.
10. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~the emphasized object is ~~user-a-selectable-object~~.
11. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~the emphasized object is highlighted.
12. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 1 wherein said video layer contains a plurality of objects and said graphics layer emphasizes a select number of ~~said~~the objects and de-emphasizes a remainder of ~~said~~the objects.
13. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 12 wherein said objects are a list of program titles.
14. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~the graphics layer is prestored in a user terminal.
15. (Currently amended) The ~~system~~program-guide of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~the graphics layer is transmitted to a user terminal.

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16. (Currently amended) A method, ~~of interaction for a program guide~~
comprising:

generating, within service provider equipment of an information distribution system, a bitstream representing ~~a~~said program guide having a video layer and a graphics layer disposed over said video layer;

communicating said bitstream to subscriber equipment;

converting, within said subscriber equipment, said bitstream into a display of said program guide; and

selectively providing at least one of emphasis and de-emphasis of at least one user-selectable object in said video layer ~~that is object~~-associated with selectable video content sent from said provider equipment using said graphics layer.

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 further comprising ~~the step of~~-producing a mask/reveal overlay within said subscriber equipment.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 wherein ~~said-producing said mask/reveal overlay includes step further comprises~~ extracting said ~~a~~ mask/reveal overlay from said graphics layer in said bitstream.

19. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 wherein said mask/reveal overlay is dynamically updated using information from said graphics layer that is extracted from ~~said~~the bitstream.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 further comprising identifying objects in ~~said~~the display through manipulation of a user input device.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 20 wherein ~~said-identifying step~~ said objects includes further comprises the step of emphasizing one of said an ~~objects with respect to other objects.~~

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22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21 further comprising ~~the step of selecting~~ said emphasized object to initiate a new context.
23. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein said new context is a preview video.
24. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein said context is an advertisement video.
25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 further comprising ~~the step of extracting~~ at least two different program guides from said bitstream.
26. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 wherein each ~~of said~~ different said program guide has audio that is common to another of said ~~different~~ multiple program guides.
27. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~20~~ 16 wherein identifying ~~objects is~~ all object identification functions are performed locally to said ~~the~~ subscriber equipment.
28. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 further comprising identifying an object and selecting said ~~the~~ identified object to synchronously jump from broadcast mode to pointcast mode.
29. (Currently amended) The method of claim 28 further comprising ~~the step of returning to~~ said ~~the~~ broadcast mode when a pointcast transmission ends.

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30. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~2246~~ wherein selecting said identified object~~identification and selection of an object~~ causes said~~the~~ graphics layer to emphasize certain objects with respect to remaining objects.

31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 further comprising ~~the steps~~ of:

selecting said user-selectable object, when said user-selectable object is an emphasized object in said program guide;
communicating the selection to said service provider equipment; and
sending, from said service provider equipment, a multi-media bitstream corresponding to said user-selectable~~selected~~ object.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein said multi-media bitstream is a video-on-demand movie.

33. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16 further comprising ~~the steps~~ of:

selecting said user-selectable object, when said user-selectable object is emphasized~~an emphasized object in said program guide;~~
causing an event in said~~the~~ service provider equipment, where said event is one or more of tuning to an analog channel, tuning to a digital channel or launching a resident capability in said~~the~~ service provider equipment.